



# Newsletter

## Editorial

Volume 2

Autumn 2001

Easter already!

I hope you all had a pleasant break and managed to get away for a while.

I went walking in the Barrington Tops for four days. If you ever get a chance to visit, it's a fantastically beautiful place. Unfortunately, even at the altitude of 1,500m, there are really serious weed problems.

Up there, the weed management issue is Scotch Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*). It was a bit depressing to see the understorey in certain areas being totally over-run by this noxious invader. Not only does it prevent the native vegetation from germinating, but it also provides ideal habitat for feral pigs.

It is so hard to control this weed that the managers of the land have taken the attitude that they will just have to live with it. This means that instead of spending endless sums of money on weed removal, they are trying to work out how they can limit its spread.

They are also hoping that work on a biological control will be successful before too much of this place is totally and irreversibly changed.

On a brighter and more local note, there have been various developments on the Greenlink and Northern Beaches Community Landcare front.

The main thing that I have been working on since the last Edition, was the 2002 Application for Natural Heritage Trust funds. If successful, this funding will enable Greenlink to continue into its third year, with a range of new projects in Pittwater, Warringah and Manly.

The application finally went off in late February. Success or failure will be announced in October.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people involved in putting this together. Manly, Warringah and Pittwater Council officers were all really helpful in tying down the final details.

There were also a few other people in NBCL who generously gave up yet more of their free time to devise new, worthwhile projects, and scrutinise those endless pages for mistakes.

Many thanks for your support.

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Greenlink is funded by the Natural Heritage Trust and supported by Pittwater and Warringah Councils

# ***NHT application for 2002.***

The third year of Greenlink will hopefully become a reality in October with the announcement of the last year of NHT funding.

The Greenlink participants were able to come up with some really interesting and exciting new additions to the overall project.

If successful, the project area will expand considerably and move into the Manly Local Government Area along Burnt Bridge Creek.

Pittwater Council has expanded the area of the project up onto the Warriewood Es-

carpment, following some of the magnificent creeklines in the area.

Similarly, Warringah has come up with a number of project areas that will connect up a number of reserves to create continuous vegetated links.

The work that has been proposed involves creekline restoration, weed tree (mainly coral trees) removal, revegetation and extensions to the areas that are currently being looked after by the various volunteer groups involved.

However, it is still important

to remember the ongoing protection of the existing bushland in all of the reserves within the project area. It is in these pockets that the really fantastic bushland and wildlife of the Northern beaches exists.

This work continues to be responsibility of the Councils, with much needed help from dedicated volunteers.

If successful, the 2002 application will provide more much needed support from Bushcare to enable sustainable management of our local bushland.

## ***New Threatened Species listings***

Just before Christmas last year, the Scientific Committee established by the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* made a final determination to list Sydney Freshwater Wetlands and Coastal Estuary Swamp Forest Complex as Endangered Ecological Communities.

Both of these communities are reasonably common throughout the Greenlink project area, but are very uncommon elsewhere. In fact, in the case of Coastal Estuary Swamp Forest Complex (CESFC), only 33 hectares exist anywhere in the world.

### **How to identify them...**

Most readily identified sites of CESFC are those that include Swamp Mahogany (*Eucalyptus robus*), those lovely furrowed corky barked Eucalypts that generally occur in swampy conditions. Various paperbarks (*Melaleuca* species) are also common dominant trees in this community.

Obviously, there are plenty of other plants within the community. These include many

shrubs, sedges and herbs.

The structure of the CESFC is described in the info package as a mosaic ranging from forest to scrub to reedland.

If this doesn't mean anything to you, go down to Dee Why Lagoon on the Richmond Ave side (south), and have a look at the vegetation there. You will be able to see reedlands, paperbark scrub, and swamp mahogany forest, all rubbing shoulders with each other, with the trees increasing in size as they get further from the water. They are all part of that community.

### **So what does this mean...**

The reason that this development is of interest to people involved in conservation work, is that the listing may really help to influence the way a lot of the remnant bushland around the area is managed. As an example, the Friends of Dee Why Lagoon project, located just off Richmond Ave has had to go under additional scrutiny, including the submission of an "Eight Part Test". This document is de-

signed to ensure that all of potential impacts of any proposed development are considered properly before permission is granted.

So even though their project is designed to protect the adjacent endangered community from weed invasion and allow it to naturally expand, it still has to go through this process.

Similarly, any bush regeneration or gathering of seed in these communities now requires a license from the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

If you choose to ignore this, you may be up for a fine of \$220,000 or 2 years in the slammer. This indicates how seriously this type of legislation is now being taken, although it should be pointed out that although the law came in in 1995, there have been no prosecutions yet.

### **What you can do...**

In terms of what the average person can do about this; the main thing is to be aware of whether either of these communities is on locations nearby. As with all environmental legislation, it is only as strong as the vigilance of the people around.

There are other patches of both of these communities in Deep Creek Reserve, Jamieson Park, South Creek, Warriewood Wetlands and several other Greenlink areas.

The listing of these communities means that the land managers have a duty to protect them from development, and may mean that they are given a higher priority for bush regeneration works or other protection.

Furthermore, any grant applications involving endangered communities or species may be viewed more favourably.

*More information can be found at:*

*[www.npws.nsw.gov.au](http://www.npws.nsw.gov.au), then go to 'nature and conservation'.*

## ***Funding Available***

Speaking of getting funding for Endangered Species or Communities protection, the latest edition of the Threatened Species Network newsletter features details on how community groups can apply for special funding.

Grants can be for such things as habitat protection and restoration, conservation agreements, weed or feral animal control, education, surveying or monitoring, managing visitor access. So they are pretty broad in their scope, but it has to be for nationally threatened species and communities (as opposed to state Threatened Communities such as those mentioned in the previous article).

They don't state how much you can apply for, but just about all community groups are eligible.

Lists of Nationally Threatened Species are available via [www.nccnsw.org.au](http://www.nccnsw.org.au).

Email Francesca Andreoni at the Threatened Species Network:

[fandrioni@wwf.org.au](mailto:fandrioni@wwf.org.au).

Or phone 8202 1229, for more details.

## ***What's in a name?***

A meeting of Northern Beaches Community Landcare Inc. (the proponent for Greenlink) in early February revealed that there was a pretty strong desire amongst members to change that name to something a little more inclusive.

There was a feeling that the 'Landcare' badge really only represents part of what this groups is trying to achieve, and that it might give the impression that the members are only interested in pulling out weeds and putting up fences.

Whilst this is certainly true for some of us, it was resolved that a more general name might prevent that perception forming in the community. In the long term, this will hopefully lead to a more diverse membership.

A few proposals were kicked around, but were ultimately deemed unsuitable for one reason or another. The last meeting of NBCL Inc unearthed another option: **Northern Beaches Envirolink**.

Short, sharp and to the point; this name has now been registered and officially adopted.

## ***Saving South Creek***

A number of Greenlink Steering Committee members have expressed concern about the fact that although South Creek is officially part of Greenlink, most of it is totally weed infested and shows no sign of improving.

The Thursday Gardeners have been struggling against Ludwigia for years in the lower reaches of the creek along the boundary of Cromer Golf Course. They have had some success in controlling the spread of this weed, but have always felt that they have been fighting against the tide, as across the creek and upstream are totally choked with various vigorous weeds.

One of the major conditions of NHT funding is that any work that it pays for must be maintained by volunteers, Council or both after the work is completed. In the case of South Creek, particularly the section between Willandra Village and Cromer Golf Course, there is no plan or infrastructure for any such maintenance work.

This being the case, to spend NHT money there removing Morning Glory and Ludwigia (amongst other things) for one year would be wasteful, as the follow up burden would be enormous and long term. The weeds have been there a long time, and are growing in sediment that has been enriched through years of fertilising from nearby market gardens.

This area needs a long term plan and funding commitment for anything worthwhile to be achieved.

But it's not all bad news. A new bush regeneration group is starting right up the top of South Creek in Beacon Hill. Led by Jodie Smith, they are planning to attack the weeds in a section of the creekline upstream of Beacon Hill High School. This is a sensible approach, as eliminating weeds upstream is the only way to remove the source of weed seeds heading downstream.

**Any new recruits would be welcomed, with training and tools supplied by Greenlink and Warringah Council. If we can get enough interested people in this area, we may be able to expand the area of healthy native bushland at this top end of South Creek.**

**Good Luck, and many thanks Jodie.**

## ***Fox hamburgers***

The National Parks and Wildlife Service has been doing some interesting survey work in the last few weeks to examine whether their fox poisoning efforts are having any effect on numbers of Southern Brown Bandicoots.

These bandicoots are an endangered species and are just the right size for a fox meal. Furthermore, they have a habit of freezing when cornered, so they are pretty much the equivalent of a fox's hamburger.

National Parks Pest Species Officer Nicola Mason and Natasha Funke, with the help of several others, have been setting traps in Garigal, Bobbin Head and Kurin-gai National Parks to get an idea of how many bandicoots there are and whether the population is growing. This will continue over several years and will hopefully reveal whether or not poisoning foxes can help to remove some of the pressure on the Southern Browns.

## ***More on Ludwigia***

Great to see that people are reading this newsletter and correcting those little errors.

James Rennie of Manly Council has seen Ludwigia flower and possibly set seed within four months of germination, rather than "within two years", as stated in the last edition.

This means that you really must pull up those seedlings as soon as you see them. This is a good policy anyway, as they are easier to get out when they are small.

Mark Beharrel of Pittwater Council reckons the seeds are viable (that is still able to germinate) for at least 10 years, not "around four years". There are a couple of people who collected seeds 10 years ago and are continuing to germinate them. At this point, it is therefore not possible to say exactly how long they can last.

He also said that there is another species of Ludwigia, (*Ludwigia longifolia*) that is starting to make an entry onto the Sydney weed scene.

Fantastic eh?

## ***Restless Natives.***

The humble Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*) seems to have the ability to raise the ire of bush regenerators like no other endemic plant. This creekline / gully tree has become so common in many areas that it is now regarded as something of a weed, but the fact that it is a native makes many people reluctant to kill it.

This plant has increased in numbers and range around Sydney and Melbourne for a number of reasons. Firstly, as hot fires no longer occur very often in urban areas, Pittosporums have been able to spread out of the gullies where they naturally exist. Natural fire patterns in Sydney are enough to control this plant, as a hot fire will kill the soft barked tree. Increased moisture and nutrient levels (from urban runoff) along bushland edges provide ideal conditions for them to get established. They have also been helped by the increase in numbers of Currawongs that eat the fruit of this plant and spread it further into the bush.

Pittosporums cause problems in dry Sydney sandstone bushland because they cast deep shade and drop about 250% more leaf litter by weight than Eucalyptus trees. Add to this the fact that the leaf litter they drop is higher in nutrients and you have a combination that is ideal for the Pittosporums to germinate (moist, dark and fertile), but not much else.

Over time, Pittosporums may come to dominate areas that were previously dominated by Eucalypts. The lack of new Eucalypts coming up in the unfavourable shady moist conditions means that eventually, the entire character of the bushland will be changed.

The Friends of Dee Why Lagoon have been finding that in certain parts of the bush there are very few, if any Swamp Mahoganies popping up in areas where the Pittosporums are most numerous. They have resorted to "thinning them out" a little, to give the Swampies enough sunlight to germinate.

This is probably the safest way to encourage germination of Eucalypts in this location. Another, equally cautious method that can be used in tandem with this, is to rake up the leaf litter below the Pittosporums to reduce moisture and nutrients and increase light levels to the soil. This may help to encourage soil stored seed to germinate.

Ideally, a fire could be used to kill the Pittosporums and encourage other natives to germinate. But fires create an awful lot of follow up work, to ensure that the area is not just colonised by other weeds. Also, because this is now an Endangered Community, any work that is done has to be especially careful not to damage it.

It could be that the best way to control Pittosporums is to hand pull them when they are seedlings. But remember that they do have a place in the Sydney bush. It's only when they move out of these places and start taking over other niches that they need to be pulled into line.

Refs: [Indigenotes](#) Jan 2001,  
Rose S and Fairweather P, [Australian Journal of Botany](#), 1997, 45 p123-149.

## ***Weed Feature.***

Weeds of the season are the Ipomoeas.

*Ipomoea indica* and *Ipomoea cairica* are better known as Morning Glory: the former is the deep purple, large leafed one that grows in sheltered conditions, and the latter has a smaller leaf shaped like a palm leaf, and the flower is paler. It usually grows on the coast and can withstand more exposed conditions than the other.

Vine weeds are potentially the most serious of all weeds, as they have the ability to overrun the canopy of native bushland. This eventually causes dieback and ultimately the total death of the native canopy. Furthermore, the deep shade cast by these invaders means that it is impossible for native seeds to germinate.

Ipomoeas grow so fast that in summer, bush regenerators have been known to lose their lunch boxes under the steadily advancing runners, between starting time and morning tea. In autumn, these vines slow down somewhat, so that treating them becomes more of a possibility.

The first rule of treating vine weeds is to get them before they become a problem. Once they are established, it is very difficult to get on top of them, especially for volunteer groups who have limited time and resources. Newly emerging vines should therefore always be a priority target for volunteers.

If the vines are already into your site, the best approach is to get into the good bush and work out where the "front" is. This is the line where the vines are most newly established, so should

be most easily removed. You then have to trace the individual runners back to the root source, being sure that you pull all of the roots at the numerous growing points along each runner.

It's really important that you make sure that you get as many of these growing points as possible. Otherwise, they will resprout from each of these. So if you snap the vine as you pull it up, you should locate the snapped off end and start again. A boning knife is handy for levering up these delicate root systems.

Some people try scraping the vines and applying herbicide to the scraped area, but the results are patchy. So it's probably better to hand pull it.

Another worthwhile thing to do is to clear any vines that are climbing up trees. If you get them now, they will have that much further to go in the growing season.

As with most weeds, remember that follow up work will be essential to control regrowth. However, a very thorough job in the first place will minimise this for *I indica*, as it does not set seed in Sydney, so there will be no soil stored seed to worry about.

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## **Biodiversity event at Beacon Hill.**

On **Sunday May 6th 2001**, the National Parks Association will be ***Celebrating Local Biodiversity*** at the Beacon Hill Community Centre (10.00-3.00pm).

Warringah Mayor, Peter Moxham and Alan Madden from the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Lands Council will welcome guests. So come along to show them you care about your local environment.

All bush regeneration groups in the area are invited to set up a display to publicise the great work they are doing in the area. There will also be a range of presentations and displays from local people involved in environmental work in the area.

Contact Judith Bennett to book: Ph 9905 2135  
Email [educ.sydney@npansw.org.au](mailto:educ.sydney@npansw.org.au)  
Visit the NPA website at [www.wildlife.com](http://www.wildlife.com)

*\$10 charge will cover catering costs etc.*

## **Field Training days**

The field training session at Anzac Reserve on Sunday 1st of April was an excellent experience. Six of the Friends of Anzac Ave attended the three hour session. They are all very familiar with the reserve and also with most of the techniques and skills required to safely and effectively work as regenerators.

So it turned out that the morning was more of a working session than a training session.

The site has the usual problems of stormwater runoff and neighbours who mostly have no interest in the beautiful and precious patch of bushland at their back door.

The group has extensive experience in the area and has managed to convince Warringah Council to put in a track part the way up through the valley to allow better access. Hopefully, this will let more people realise how fantastic the bush here is, and get involved in its protection.

I'm sure we'll hear more from this dedicated and moti-



# **Greenlink Events. All welcome.**

## **May**

**5th** Reefcare planting day. Long Reef Point 8.45 – 11.00

Reefcare BBQ at Long Reef point 11.00. All welcome.

OzGREEN site maintenance day. Opp Mobile Service Station Fisher Rd North 9.00am – 12.00.

## **6th**

Friends of Warriewood Wetlands bush regeneration 9.00-12.00 meet end of Katoa Cl

NPA Celebration of Biodiversity at Beacon Hill Community Centre from 10.00am. See article inside for details.

## **12th**

Training day at Dee Why Lagoon Wildlife Refuge 9.00am – 12.00 meet Richmond Av

## **20th**

Friends of Dee Why Lagoon bush regeneration 9.00-12.00 meet Richmond Av.

Tree Planting along Dee Why Creek in Dee Why Park. 9.00 – 12.00. All Welcome.

## **June**

### **2nd**

Reefcare site maintenance day. Long Reef Point 8.45 – 12.00

OzGREEN site maintenance day. Opp Mobile

Service Station Fisher Rd North 9.00am – 12.00.

### **3rd**

Friends of Warriewood Wetlands bush regeneration 9.00-12.00 meet end of Katoa Cl

### **9th**

Training program. Location to be decided 9.00-12.00.

### **17th**

Friends of Dee Why Lagoon bush regeneration 9.00-12.00 meet Richmond Av

## **July**

### **7th**

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### **8th**

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### **17th**

Friends of Dee Why Lagoon bush regeneration 9.00-12.00 meet Richmond Av

### **29th**

National Tree Planting Day. Along Dee Why Creek in Dee Why Park. 9.00 – 12.00. All Welcome.

**Contact John Harkin, Project Officer of Greenlink for further information, comments or contributions.**

**Any contributions, criticisms, ideas or suggestions would be gratefully received. Please feel free to use any of this stuff in other newsletters.**

**Ph fax: 9970 8402  
PO Box 522  
Narrabeen 2101.**

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Come along to the beautiful Dee Why Lagoon Wildlife Refuge (on Richmond Ave) on May 12th for the best brief training session money can't buy.

You are Welcome to join **Greenlink** and **Warringah Council** in their joint training program for all Friends of the Bush in Warringah. New members are also welcome.

This is an opportunity for you to:

- \* Learn new skills,
- \* Learn about plant / weed identification,
- \* Develop safe work practices,
- \* Find out more about the Endangered Vegetation Community in the area,
- \* Meet some of the dedicated volunteers in the area and swap ideas and information.

Jim Casimir and Geoff Bakewell will be your trainers.  
9.00 am – 12.00; bring gloves, morning tea, hat etc.

Bookings are required. Please phone 9942-2439.

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